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SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 5 August 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, in regard to the letter and annex addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia, dated 12 July 1993 (A/48/261-S/26073), which dealt with the mistreatment of the Croatian population living in the province of Vojvodina, located in the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" (Serbia and Montenegro), a July 1993 report by the human rights organization, Helsinki Watch, addressed this very same issue.

In this report (volume 5, issue 11) entitled "Abuses Continue in the Former Yugoslavia: Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina", inter alia, the abuses of the human rights of the Croatian and Hungarian population living in Vojvodina is documented. In depicting the forced displacement of the non-Serbian population in this province, the incidents in the town of Hrtkovci are given particular mention.

The town of Hrtkovci had a population of 4,000 in May of 1992, of which approximately 80 per cent were Croats. Some two months later, the population was 75 per cent Serbian. The expulsion of most of the Croatian population was carried out through a policy of verbal and physical harassment, as well as other forms of intimidation, by Serbian paramilitary groups. Armed men threatened the Croats with guns and knives demanding that they leave. Many people were subjected to beatings, including the local Roman Catholic priest, and one man, Milan Stefanac, was found bludgeoned to death.

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* A/48/150.

It is important to point out that the town of Hrtkovci, as well as the entire province of Vojvodina, is situated close to the Serbian capital of Belgrade and is firmly under the control and supervision of the Government in Belgrade. Therefore, it is to be concluded that these abuses can only be conducted with the support and approval of the Serbian authorities.

I would be grateful if you would provide for the distribution of the text of the present letter as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 115 (c) of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladimir DROBNJAK
Chargé d'affaires a.i.